

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 18113 01 OF 02 011607Z
ACTION NODS-00

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-----033857 011610Z /44
Z 011556Z AUG 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 2140

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 18113

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FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM ATHERTON

U.S. DEL. NO. 33

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L., JR.)
SUBJECT: LAST MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL-AUG. 1

SUMMARY: AT TWO-HOUR MEETING I REQUESTED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL TODAY TO GO OVER WHAT HAD HAPPENED DURING MY VISIT, HE GAVE ME A GENERAL IDEA OF WHAT STEPS THE EGYPTIAN SIDE NOW SEES SUBSTITUTING FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF DIRECT TALKS THEY HAVE REJECTED. BASICALLY KAMEL SUGGESTS THE SECRETARY GO TO ISRAEL AND RECEIVE THE INEVITABLE NO TO SADAT'S PROPOSAL TO EXCLUDE "LAND AND SOVEREIGNTY" FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND THEN COME TO CAIRO "FOR OUR NO TO THEIR NO." AT THAT POINT, IF THE SECRETARY INVITES THE PARTIES TO A NEW ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS, BASED ON THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES, ASSUMPTION BY THE PARTIES OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER RESOLUTION 242, AND THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INADMISSIBILITY OF ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR -- EGYPT WILL CONSIDER ATTENDING. (IN RESPONSE TO OUR SUBSEQUENT PROBING OF WHAT THIS MEANS PRECISELY, AL-BAZ MADE CLEAR EGYPTIANS WANT GREATER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 18113 01 OF 02 011607Z

SPECIFICITY ON THE MEANING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WITHDRAWAL PRINCIPLES OF RESOLUTION 242, TO MATCH THE GREATER SPECIFICITY THEY HAVE ALREADY AGREED TO ON PEACE AND SECURITY.) KAMEL SAID SAUDI ARABIA WOULD ENDORSE RENEWED DIRECT TALKS ON THIS BASIS, AND THAT JORDAN AND IN THE END SYRIA WOULD AGREE TO ATTEND SUCH A MEETING. HE THOUGHT PLO PARTICIPATION COULD BE PUT

ASIDE FOR NOW, WHILE INDICATING THAT CURRENT FERMENT INSIDE THE PLO MIGHT MAKE THE PARTICIPATION OF MODERATE PALESTINIANS POSSIBLE AT SOME POINT. IF ISRAEL REFUSED TO GO ON THE BASIS OF THESE PRINCIPLES, IT WOULD BE ISOLATED IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND ULTIMATELY THE UNITED STATES. THIS SCENARIO CAME IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY AS TO HOW EGYPT SAW THE PEACE PROCESS MOVING FORWARD IN PRACTICAL TERMS AND IN WHAT SEQUENCE OF DIPLOMATIC STEPS, NOW THAT IT HAD DECIDED NOT TO GO ALONG WITH THE WAY WE THOUGHT WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE. IT CAME, HOWEVER, ONLY AFTER AN ALMOST UNINTERRUPTED MONOLOGUE LASTING 45 MINUTES, DURING WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WITH UNUSUAL ELOQUENCE, STRESSED THEIR CONCERNS AND WORRIES ABOUT THE "WAVERING" OF THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY ITS RELUCTANCE TO CONFRONT ISRAEL IN ITS REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE OBLIGATION TO WITHDRAW FROM ARAB TERRITORY IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PEACE AND SECURITY EGYPT IS OFFERING. HE STRESSED THAT EGYPT DOES NOT OBJECT TO A NEW ROUND OF TALKS WITH ISRAEL PER SE, BUT WHAT HAD "SCARED" EGYPT WAS THE AMBIGUOUS IDEAS PRESENTED BY US TO THEM FOR CARRYING FORWARD THOSE TALKS. HE SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE AMERICAN IMAGE IS IN DANGER OF BEING TARNISHED IN THE ARAB WORLD, AND THAT PRESIDENT SADAT AND OTHER MODERATE ARAB GOVERNMENTS "WILL PAY THE PRICE" DIRECTLY IF THE UNITED STATES
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 18113 01 OF 02 011607Z

FAILS TO BRING "PEACE WITH JUSTICE" TO THE MIDDLE EAST. HE LEFT NO DOUBT THAT JUSTICE IN THIS CASE MEANS RETRIEVING ARAB LANDS FROM ISRAELI OCCUPATION. IN THE COURSE OF THIS LONG AND SOMETIMES REPETITIOUS STATEMENT, HE TOOK STRONG EXCEPTION TO THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S LABELLING PRESIDENT SADAT'S POSITION AS DISAPPOINTING. DESPITE MY CLARIFICATION THAT THE SPOKESMAN HAD SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S POSITION, AND HAD SAID ONLY THAT WE WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT EGYPT HAD NOT AGREED TO ANOTHER ROUND OF DIRECT TALKS, KAMEL INSISTED PRESS HAD INTERPRETED THE SPOKESMAN'S WORDS AS CRITICAL OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HIS OWN CRITICAL REMARKS LATER TO THE PRESS (SEPTTEL) REFLECTED HIS CONTINUING SENSITIVITY ABOUT WHAT THE SPOKESMAN HAD SAID. AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING, KAMEL SAID, IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS ABOUT PRINCE FAHD'S TALKS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT YESTERDAY, THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT WERE IN COMPLETE ACCORD ON HOW PRESIDENT SADAT HAS DECIDED TO PROCEED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE DID NOT GO INTO DETAILS, NOTING HE HAD NOT ATTENDED MOST OF THE PRIVATE TALKS BETWEEN FAHD

AND SADAT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO EVINced
DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE SECRETARY IS NOT PLANNING TO
VISIT SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN DURING THIS VISIT,
NOTING THAT "THESE PEOPLE COULD BE HELPFUL." HE
SAID THAT BOTH HE AND PRESIDENT SADAT ARE VERY MUCH
LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MEETINGS IN ALEXANDRIA WITH
THE SECRETARY, AND STRESSED HOW IMPORTANT EGYPT
CONSIDERS CONTINUING TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 18113 02 OF 02 011608Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 18113

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STATES. END SUMMARY.

1. FULL REPORT FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.

2. COMMENT: KAMEL HAD RETURNED FROM ALEXANDRIA LAST
EVENING. ALTHOUGH HE WAS SUPPOSED TO ATTEND NSC MEETING
TODAY, SADAT SENT HIM BACK TO CAIRO FOR FURTHER TALK
WITH ME. KAMEL WAS USING NOTES IN GIVING THE FORMULA
CITED ABOVE AND, WHILE THE MOST HE WOULD SAY IS THAT
GOE WILL CONSIDER ATTENDING ANOTHER MEETING IF U.S.
INVITATION IS CAST IN TERMS OF HIS SUGGESTED FORMULA,
IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE WOULD HAVE GONE THIS FAR UNLESS
HE FELT REASONABLY SURE THAT HE WAS REFLECTING
SADAT'S VIEW. EILTS

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